

MORESQUE ORNAMENT.

of objects, the secondary and tertiary on the lower. This also appears to be in accordance with a natural law; we have the primary blue in the sky, the secondary green in the trees and fields, ending with the tertiaries on the earth; as also in flowers, where we generally find the primaries on the buds and flowers, and the secondaries on the leaves and stalks.

The ancients always observed this rule in the best periods of art. In Egypt, however, we do see occasionally the secondary green used in the upper portions of the temples, but this arises from the fact, that ornaments in Egypt were symbolical; and if a lotus leaf were used on the upper part of a building, it would necessarily be coloured green; but the law is true in the main; the general aspect of an Egyptian temple of the Pharaonic period gives the primaries above and the secondaries below; but in the buildings of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods more especially, this order was inverted, and the palm and lotus leaf capitals give a superabundance of green in the upper portions of the temples.

In Pompeii we find sometimes in the interior of the houses a gradual gradation of colour downwards from the roof, from light to dark, ending with black; but this is by no means so universal as to convince us that they felt it as a law. We have already shown in Chapter V. that there are many examples of black immediately under the ceiling.

13. Although the ornaments which are found in the Alhambra, and in the *Court of the Lions* especially, are at the present day covered with several thin coats of the whitewash which has at various periods been applied to them, we may be said to have authority for the whole of the colouring of our reproduction; for not only may the colours be seen in the interstices of the ornaments in many places by scaling off the whitewash, but the colouring of the Alhambra was carried out on so perfect a system, that any one who will make this a study, can with almost absolute certainty, on being shown for the first time a piece of Moorish ornament in white, define at once the manner in which it was coloured. So completely were all the architectural forms designed with reference to their subsequent colouring, that the surface alone will indicate the colours they were destined to receive. Thus, in using the colours blue, red, and gold, they took care to place them in such positions that they should be best seen in themselves, and add most to the general effect. *On moulded surfaces they placed red, the strongest colour of the three in the depths*, where it might be softened by shadow, never on the surface; *blue in the shade*, and *gold on all surfaces exposed to light*; for it is evident that by this arrangement alone could their true value be obtained. The several colours are either separated by white bands, or by the shadow caused by the relief of the ornament itself—and this appears to be an absolute principle required in colouring—*colours should never be allowed to impinge upon each other*.

14. In colouring the grounds of the various diapers the blue always occupies the largest area; and this is in accordance with the theory of optics, and the experiments which have been made with the prismatic spectrum. The rays of light are said to neutralise each other in the proportions of 3 yellow, 5 red, and 8 blue; thus, it requires a quantity of blue equal to the red and yellow put together to produce a harmonious effect, and prevent the predominance of any one colour over the others. As in the "Alhambra," yellow is replaced by gold, which tends towards a reddish-yellow, the blue is still further increased, to counteract the tendency of the red to overpower the other colours.

INTERLACED PATTERNS.

We have already suggested, in Chapter IV., the probability that the immense variety of Moorish ornaments, which are formed by the intersection of equidistant lines, could be traced through the

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Arabian to the Greek fret. The ornaments on Plate XXXIX. are constructed on two general principles; Nos. 1-12, 16-18, are constructed on one principle (Diagram No. 1), No. 14 on the other (Diagram No. 2). In the first series the lines are equidistant diagonally crossed by horizontal and

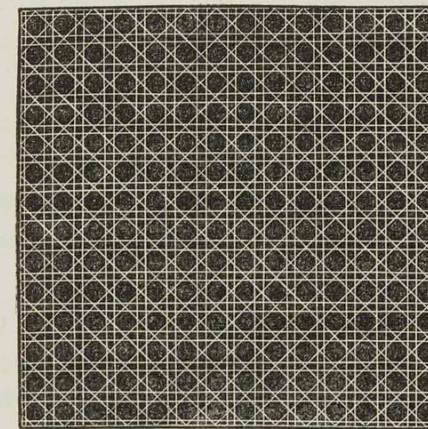


Diagram No. 1.

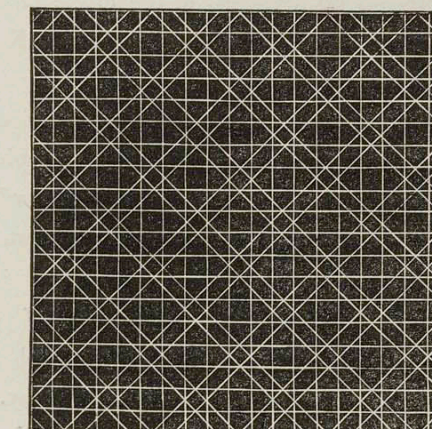


Diagram No. 2.

perpendicular lines on each square. But the system on which No. 14 is constructed, the perpendicular and horizontal lines are equidistant, and the diagonal lines cross only each alternate square. The number of patterns that can be produced by these two systems would appear to be infinite; and it will be seen, on reference to Plate XXXIX., that the variety may be still further increased by the mode of colouring the ground or the surface lines. Any one of these patterns which we have engraved might be made to change its aspect, by bringing into prominence different chains or other general masses.

LOZENGE DIAPERS.

The general effect of Plate XLI. and XLI*. will, we think, at once justify the superiority we have claimed for the ornament of the Moors. Composed of but three colours, they are more harmonious and effective than any others in our collection, and possesses a peculiar charm which all the others fail to approach. The various principles for which we have contended, the constructive idea whereby each leading line rests upon another, the gradual transitions from curve to curve, the tangential curvatures of the lines, the flowing off of the ornaments from a parent stem, the tracing of each flower to its branch and root, the division and subdivision of general lines, will readily be perceived in every ornament on the page.

SQUARE DIAPERS.

The ornament No. 1, on Plate XLII., is a good example of the principle we contend for, that to produce repose the lines of a composition should contain in equilibrium the *straight*, the *inclined*, and the *curved*. We have lines running horizontally, perpendicularly, and diagonally, again contrasted by circles in opposite directions. So that the most perfect repose is obtained, the tendency of the eye to run in any direction is immediately corrected by lines giving an opposite tendency, and wherever the eye strikes upon the patterns it is inclined to dwell. The blue ground of the inscriptions and ornamental panels and centres, being carried over the red ground by the blue feathers, produces a most cheerful and brilliant effect.

The leading lines of the ornaments Nos. 2-4, Plates XLII. and XLII*, are produced in the same way as the interlaced ornaments on Plate XXXIX. In Nos. 2 and 4 it will be seen how the repose